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NEW YORK: In an effort to maintain focus on the conflict-wrecked Central Asian country in Congress, 10 American lawmakers have come together to form a working group on Afghanistan. Different from the Congress Caucus on Afghanistan, the working group that wants Afghanistan decoupled from Iraq is co-chaired by Congressmen Steve Israel (D-NY) and Mark Kirk (R-IL).

Other members of the group are Henry Waxman (D-CA), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), David Price (D-NC), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY), Dennis Moore (D-KS), Robert E. (Bud) Cramer (D-AL) and Tim Bishop (D-NY).

Among other objectives of the group are to show the will of the House to win in Afghanistan, emphasise the need to deal with Pakistan and develop strategic messages to keep the American public interested in winning the war against Taliban and other insurgent outfits.

Afghan Ambassador Said T. Jawad, who met congressmen at the Capitol Hill on Thursday, welcomed the formation of the working group. This is a good development, Jawad told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Jawad said Israel had assured the US commitment to Afghanistan was long-term and indicated Washington would have the same degree of involvement as it had in South Korea - both military and civilian, the ambassador added. "The Korean model would be adopted, Jawad observed, saying Israel - also a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water - also discussed with the ambassador on how to meet the energy need of Afghanistan in coming years.

The ambassador also met Senator Chuck Hagel and Congressman Joe Wilson. Both of them were recently in Afghanistan. The lawmakers are active on Afghanistan related activities in the Congress.